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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Equality of Treatment for Persons with Disabilities

 THE HINDU

13 June 2026 · SOCIAL ISSUES · POLITY · GS2

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Equality of Treatment for Persons with Disabilities

 **The Hindu** 13 June 2026 **GS2**

Source: ujivari.com — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"Welfare delivered at a state's discretion can vary enormously between citizens with the same need. When does a discretionary benefit become a right, and should a minimum disability pension be a national entitlement?"

Source: [Original editorial](#)  [The Hindu](#)

 Every fact web-verified against primary sources **HOW**

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

India's **disability pensions** are discretionary and vary sharply across states, leaving persons with disabilities with unequal support. For an aspirant, this is a GS2 case on **social justice, the rights of persons with disabilities, and the line between discretionary welfare and a constitutional entitlement.**

THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

Disability pensions in India are **discretionary** and differ widely by state, so identical needs get unequal support, a lottery of residence. The **RPwD Act, 2016** and the UN Convention frame disability support as a **right**, not charity. A **nationally mandated minimum pension floor**, with state top-ups, would guarantee a baseline of dignity everywhere while preserving state autonomy.

THE ISSUE, DECODED

CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
Discretionary welfare	Benefit at the state's choosing	Unequal support for identical needs
RPwD Act, 2016	Rights-based disability law	Frames support as dignity, not charity
Minimum floor	A guaranteed national baseline	Equal dignity, with state top-ups allowed
Cooperative federalism	Centre and states sharing a mandate	How a national floor can be funded

THE ANALYSIS: WHY A NATIONAL FLOOR IS NEEDED

- 1 **The residence lottery.** Pension amounts and eligibility vary so widely that the same disability yields very different support across states.
- 2 **Rights, not charity.** The RPwD Act and the UN Convention treat support as a matter of dignity and entitlement.
- 3 **A floor, not a ceiling.** A national minimum guarantees a baseline while letting richer states do more.
- 4 **The federal objection is answerable.** A floor can be co-funded and indexed without centralising the whole domain.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

*the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**, replacing the 1995 Act, recognises 21 categories of disability and gives effect to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, which India ratified in 2007. **The institutions:** the **Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities** and state commissioners; the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**. **The schemes:** disability pensions under the **National Social Assistance Programme** and various state schemes. **Concept:** discretionary benefit versus entitlement; equality before the law (Article 14).*

THE DEBATE

Argument for a national floor: Equal needs deserve equal treatment; a mandated minimum, indexed and co-funded, guarantees dignity everywhere while allowing states to top up.

Argument for state discretion: Welfare is a state subject best calibrated to local fiscal capacity; a national mandate could strain poorer states and centralise a domain better left to them.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT IT

Frame the answer around the **discretion-versus-entitlement** distinction and the equality principle. Use the RPwD Act and UNCRPD to establish the rights frame, then argue for a **floor with top-ups** as the federalism-respecting middle path. Avoid presenting it as Centre-versus-states.

THE DIAGRAM IN WORDS

Picture a national road with a guaranteed minimum width everywhere, so no traveller is left on a goat track, while any state that can afford it may build a wider highway on top. The floor protects the weakest; the top-up rewards capacity.

PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC has asked about the rights of persons with disabilities, the RPwD Act and social-justice delivery. This editorial connects those to the design question of national floors versus state discretion.

THE ONE-LINE TAKEAWAY

When support responds to a recognised right, it should not depend on a citizen's address; a national minimum disability pension would make dignity a floor, not a lottery.

Source: Equality of Treatment for Persons with Disabilities – Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

India's disability pensions are discretionary and vary widely across states, leaving persons with disabilities with unequal and often inadequate support, and the remedy is a nationally mandated minimum disability pension floor that converts welfare into a constitutional entitlement while preserving state autonomy for top-ups.

✓ **SUPPORTING**

- Pension amounts and eligibility differ sharply across states, so two citizens with identical disabilities receive vastly different support depending on where they live, violating the spirit of equal treatment.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and India's commitments under the UN Convention frame disability support as a matter of rights and dignity, not charity.
- A national minimum floor would guarantee a baseline of dignity everywhere while still allowing better-resourced states to provide more.


COUNTER

Some argue that welfare is a state subject best calibrated to local fiscal capacity, and that a national mandate could strain poorer states or centralise a domain better left to states.


WAY FORWARD

Establish a nationally mandated minimum disability pension indexed to inflation, fund it through cooperative Centre-state arrangements, allow states to top up, and align it with the rights framework of the RPwD Act.


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MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK
QUESTION

"Discretionary, state-varying welfare undermines the equality of citizens with the same need." Examine in the context of disability pensions and the rights of persons with disabilities in India. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

A pension that depends on the state one happens to live in is not a right; it is a lottery. For persons with disabilities, that lottery decides whether they receive dignity or destitution.

BODY

India recognises the rights of persons with disabilities in law. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, enacted to give effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, expanded the recognised categories of disability and framed support as a matter of rights and dignity rather than charity.

Yet the disability pension, the most basic instrument of income support, remains discretionary and is administered largely by states, with amounts and eligibility that vary enormously. The result is a deep inequality: two citizens with identical impairments and identical needs receive very different support depending only on their state of residence.

This sits uneasily with the constitutional promise of equality and with the dignity that the rights framework asserts. The case for a nationally mandated minimum pension floor is that it would guarantee a baseline of dignity to every person with a disability, anywhere in the country, while leaving states free to provide more.

The objection, that welfare is a state subject calibrated to local fiscal capacity, is real but answerable: a floor can be funded through cooperative Centre-state arrangements, indexed to inflation, and designed to set a minimum rather than a ceiling. The deeper point is that when a benefit responds to a fundamental need and a recognised right, its provision should not be left to vary as widely as it does.

CONCLUSION

A minimum disability pension, mandated nationally and topped up locally, would turn a discretionary benefit into a guaranteed floor of dignity, which is what a rights-based framework demands.

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